

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 6528

PARTIAL VETO C 324 L 20 Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the prevention of derelict vessels.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Lovelett, McCoy, Takko, Das, Hasegawa, Rolfes, Van De Wege and Wilson, C.; by request of Department of Natural Resources).

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Derelict Vessel Removal Program. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the Derelict Vessel Removal Program (DVRP). Under DVRP, certain state agencies and local governments, including DNR, may take custody and dispose of abandoned or derelict vessels on or above aquatic lands within their jurisdiction. These agencies are known as authorized public entities (APEs), and also include entities such as the Department of Fish and Wildlife; the State Parks and Recreation Commission; and cities, counties, and port districts with jurisdiction over aquatic lands.

Abandoned or Derelict Vessels. In order to be considered abandoned, a vessel must be impermissibly left in the same area for a period of 30 consecutive days, or 90 days in a 365-day period, where the owner is either unknown, cannot be located, or is unwilling to take control of the vessel. In order to be derelict, a vessel must have an owner who exerts control over the vessel that is impermissibly left on public waters or property, impermissibly left on private property, or is left for seven days and is in danger of sinking, obstructing a waterway, or endangering life or property.

Once an APE takes custody of a vessel, it may use or dispose of the vessel in any environmentally sound manner. An APE must first attempt to derive some value from the vessel either in whole or by scrap. An abandoned or derelict vessel owner must reimburse an APE for reasonable removal and disposal costs. If a value can be derived, then that amount will be subtracted from the financial liabilities of the owner. If the vessel has no salvageable value, then an APE must use the least costly disposal method. If the owner is unknown or unable to pay the cost, an APE may seek reimbursement up to 90 percent of the costs.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Monies in the Derelict Vessel Removal Account are used to reimburse APEs. DNR may spend no more than \$200,000 in any one biennium on the DVRP.

Vessel Owner Accountability. The owner or operator of a vessel that is more than 40 years old and longer than 65 feet must obtain a vessel inspection before transferring ownership of the vessel to another party. Similarly, an individual or company that purchases or otherwise receives a used vessel greater than 65 feet in length and more than 40 years old must secure a marine insurance policy prior to or concurrent with the transfer of ownership.

A copy of the inspection report must be provided to the transferee and DNR. Failure to do so can result in the initial owner of the vessel being secondarily liable for some of the costs should the vessel eventually become abandoned or derelict. If the vessel inspection determines the vessel is not seaworthy, and the value of the vessel is less than the anticipated cost to return the vessel to seaworthiness, the vessel owner may not sell or transfer ownership of the vessel unless criteria are met.

Criminal Liability. It is a misdemeanor to cause a vessel to become abandoned or derelict. A misdemeanor is punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than 90 days, not more than a \$1,000 fine, or both.

Summary: The minimum length of a vessel for which an owner must obtain an inspection before transferring a vessel more than 40 years old is changed from vessels longer than 65 feet to vessels longer than 35 feet. The minimum length of a vessel for which a prospective owner must obtain a marine insurance policy before purchasing or otherwise receiving a vessel more than 40 years old is changed from vessels longer than 65 feet to vessels longer than 35 feet. DNR is authorized to adopt rules to determine whether a vessel is seaworthy. DVRP staff may issue tickets by mail to enforce vessel registration requirements.

The limitation that DNR may spend no more than \$200,000 in any one biennium on the DVRP is removed.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	97	0

Effective: June 11, 2020

Partial Veto Summary:

- Removed the authority for DNR to issue grants to local law enforcement agencies for enforcement of vessel registration and aquatic laws related to the DVRP.
- Removed the authority for DNR to carry out a pilot project for the purpose of testing possible recycling streams for wood and fiberglass recovered from derelict vessels.